



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alaska Air National Guardsmen conduct back-to-back rescue missions

CAMP DENALI, Alaska—Airmen with the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons had a busy Sunday when they were tasked to respond to two separate rescue missions July 28.

The 11th Air Force Rescue Coordination Center was notified at 7 p.m. that a hiker had fallen and fractured his leg while hiking on Esther Island, southeast of Anchorage.

"The Coast Guard requested the 176th Wing to support and respond to the incident, and the mission was accepted immediately," said Senior Master Sgt. Robert Carte, the superintendent of the 11th Air Force RCC.

At 8:20 p.m., an HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the 210th Rescue Squadron with two Guardian Angels from the 212th Rescue Squadron took off from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

"Thirty minutes after taking off, they arrived on scene and located the hiker," Carte said. "Because of the terrain, they used a hoist to load the hiker on to the helicopter."

From there, the injured man was flown to Anchorage and released to a local hospital at 9:10 p.m.

However, the evening was not over for the rescue Guardsmen. Another call came in at 9:35 p.m. regarding a pilot who had crashed in the White Mountains, north of Fairbanks.

"The Alaska State Troopers received a SPOT (beacon) activation and a text message from the pilot saying that he had crashed but was uninjured," Carte explained. "Once the Troopers determined it was a downed aircraft, they turned it over to us."

"The SPOT technology used by the pilot assisted in his recovery, but it's important to also have a 406 MHz ELT," Carte said. "The SPOT message goes first to a commercial call center, then to AST dispatch before being routed to the RCC, whereas the 406 ELT message comes

directly to us here at JBER. Pilots can also use the FAA enhanced reporting system in conjunction with their commercial satellite tracker. Redundant systems are never a bad idea in Alaska.”

The 176th Wing accepted the mission at 9:45 p.m. The crew from the earlier mission was briefed and immediately began refueling and planning for this mission.

“They had about one hour and 20 minutes turn-around time,” Carte said.

At 11:25 p.m., the HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the 210th Rescue Squadron with two Guardian Angels from the 212th Rescue Squadron from the earlier mission departed from JBER, accompanied by an HC-130 King aircraft from the 211th Rescue Squadron, also with a pararescue team of Guardian Angels.

“The HH-60 got to the scene of the crash at 1 a.m. and within 10 minutes, assessed the pilot as having no injuries,” Carte said.

The pilot was hoisted from the steep terrain into the helicopter and flown to Eielson Air Force Base, where he was released to security forces at 2 a.m.

In less than nine hours, the rescue squadrons took part in two rescue missions in two different areas of the state.

“Not only is it good for the community, it’s also good training for the crews,” Carte said. “Situations like this simulate the busy combat environment where crews cannot relax and let their guard down. At any time, the next mission can come up. The crews are used to being 100 percent ready through their entire alert shift.”

The 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons were credited with two saves for the two missions, and the 211th was credited with one save for their participation in the second mission.

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